

REMARKS

The present Amendment is in response to the Examiner's Office Action mailed October 10, 2007. Claims 11 and 15-22 are cancelled and claims 1, 23, and 33 are amended. Claims 1-10, 12-14, and 23-37 are now pending in view of the above amendments.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments to the claims and the following remarks. For the Examiner's convenience and reference, Applicant's remarks are presented in the order in which the corresponding issues were raised in the Office Action.

Please note that the following remarks are not intended to be an exhaustive enumeration of the distinctions between any cited references and the claimed invention. Rather, the distinctions identified and discussed below are presented solely by way of example to illustrate some of the differences between the claimed invention and the cited references. In addition, Applicants request that the Examiner carefully review any references discussed below to ensure that Applicants understanding and discussion of the references, if any, is consistent with the Examiner's understanding.

I. Allowed Subject Matter

The Examiner has indicated that claims 4, 7, 9-11, 13, 14, 23, 32-34, 36, and 37 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, Applicants have rewritten claim 1 to represent claim 11 in an independent format. Applicants have also rewritten claims 23 and 33 in independent format so as to include all of the elements of the base claim. In particular, the scope of claims 1, 23, and 33 have not been narrowed in any way from that indicated as allowable, nor so as to overcome any prior art, but have merely been rewritten in an independent format. As acknowledged by the Examiner, those claims are patentably distinct from the prior art, and is now in a condition for allowance. Moreover, for at least the same reason, claims now depending from claim 1, 23, or 33 – namely, claims 2-10, 12-14, 24-32, and 34-37 – are also in a condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe the claims as amended are in allowable form. In the event that the Examiner finds remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, or which may be overcome by an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Dated this 30th day of January, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,

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